

Victoria Street Newz

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*"All the news that fits,
we print"*

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Temporary Autonomous Shelter Committee Survey 2009

by Renée McBeth and Tamara Herman

The Temporary Autonomous Shelter Collective (TASC) is a group of homeless, unstably housed and housed individuals determined to take collective action on homelessness by ensuring that all residents on Coast Salish can live with dignity, autonomy and respect. TASC was formed to explore the possibility of creating user-run communities of temporary shelters, often called 'tent cities.'

TENT-CITY TALK

Following Judge Ross' BC Superior Court 'Tent City' ruling in October 2009, on the constitutional right of homeless people to erect shelters in the absence of sufficient shelter beds, TASC began to research 'tent

cities.' We found that user-designed and user-run communities of temporary shelters have proven to be successful short-

term solutions to housing crises in many communities throughout the United States. Residents report that 'tent cities' provide safety, comfort, dignity, and support for people who can't access shelters or who have different needs.

continued on page 3



véronique da silva
PHOTOGRAPHY

March for Dignity

May 31st, 2009.

The Needle exchange has been closed for a year. The city dithers. The unpermitted march begins. The police try to lead it. It weaves unexpectedly through the neighbourhood. It ends where it started.

The redwood tree at Vancouver and Pandora.

A grassroots group calling itself Harm Reduction Victoria set up a table with clean needles on it.

Guerrilla Needle Exchange.

Pete Rockwell's story

Véronique's photo
www.dasilvafoto.com

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causes of poverty, and by working
for peaceful, non-violent change.

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information about us, can be
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JUST ANOTHER RANT

On June 10th and 11th, in the Supreme Court of BC, three
judges (two women and one man, interestingly referred to
as "your ladies" or "your lord") heard the Appeal of Madam
Justice Carol Ross' 08 decision which found a city bylaw to be
in violation of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The story, in a nutshell: In 2004 homeless man David Johnston
insisted on his right to sleep, with self-created shelter, on the
publically owned lands at St. Ann's Academy. Provincial and
municipal authorities harassed and arrested David in a catch
and release game that saw David imprisoned and charged and
released, charged and released. He would return repeatedly to
St. Ann's in an attempt to assert his rights and stake his claim,
they would harass him by waking him up at regular intervals
through the night, driving him to the edge of town, etc. David
determinedly put up with all that in an effort to assert his (and
our) right to sleep on publically owned land, and be heard
before a judge when that right is denied.

In 2005 David's friends, along with other homeless and poor
people and advocates, set up camp for two weeks at St. Ann's.
When they were forcibly removed, they relocated across the
street at Cridge Park. They created a safe space for women,
a place where homeless people could congregate, build
community, make friends, sleep with protective shelter, look
after themselves and each other, get cleaned up, park their stuff
during the day while they went in search of employment or
housing. Another group of tents emerged, on the same patch of
land at Cridge Park, but a short distance away from the original
camp. Police raids on the camps found some serious street
drugs and underage girls in the second camp. They shut down
both camps - hauling everything away to the landfill. Aside
from policing, the City was not involved in providing anything
for the homeless community builders.

David remembers, "They had always tried to divide the camp
against itself, but even the methheads were being respectful enough
(probably because they were enjoying the freedom of it as well)."

David and friends found Irene
Faulkner (left) and Cathie Boies-
Parker, two lawyers studied in
Constitutional Law. These two
agreed that a city bylaw, which
forbade homeless people from
constructing temporary shelter
to protect themselves from the
elements, might be considered
in violation of Canada's Charter
which protects the right to life,
liberty, and security of person.



janinebandcroft.blogspot.com

And so began a three year attempt to hear the
case in BC's Supreme Court. The City and
Province did all they could to keep the case
from being heard, but it finally went to trial
in June 2008. Madam Justice Carol Ross
declared, in a report released October 08 (and
available in the 'documents' section of relativenewz.ca):

(a) Sections 13(1) and (2), 14(1) and (2), and 16(1) of the
Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 07-059 and ss. 73(1) and 74(1)
of the Streets and Traffic Bylaw No. 92-84 violate s. 7 of the
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in that they deprive
homeless people of life, liberty and security of the person in a
manner not in accordance with the principles of fundamental
justice, and are not saved by s. 1 of the *Charter*.

(b) Sections 13(1) and (2), 14(1) and (2), and 16(1) of the Parks
Regulation Bylaw No. 07-059 and ss. 73(1) and 74(1) of the
Streets and Traffic Bylaw No. 92-84 are of no force and effect
insofar and only insofar as they apply to prevent homeless
people from erecting temporary shelter.

On June 10th of this year, the BC Supreme Court heard the
City, the Province, and the Union of BC Municipalities argue
that Carol Ross' ruling was not sound. These were primarily
concerned, as I saw it, about the Court's intervention in city
affairs. They don't like that their laws are open to scrutiny. On
June 11th, Cathie and Irene, along with friends from the BC Civil
Liberties Association, the Pivot Legal Society, and the Poverty
and Human Rights Centre, defended Justice Ross' decision.

Many media perspectives will no doubt emerge. Stephen
Andrew (A Channel) was in the courtroom on the 10th,
noticably absent the second day. Other identifiable media at
this black robe affair were Lisa from CBC, Jason from Monday,
Andrew Macleod from the Tyee.ca, and Andrew Ainsley from
the newly forming B Channel. I blogged.

The three judges will release their decision - either upholding
Carol Ross' decision, or finding it unsound - in due course. Any
appeal of their decision will be heard in the Supreme Court of
Canada.

Incidentally, Cathie and Irene have been
recognized both by the Bar Association of
BC and the Lieutenant Governor (Stephen
Pointe) for their work championing the
rights of the poor.

*David Johnston has journalled since 2004 at
www.angelfire.com/apeshatrackman/welcome.htm.*

*I'm participating on a humanitarian aid
mission to Cuba, leaving July 5th - you're
welcome to follow that adventure at
cubajourney.blogspot.com.*

OPINION Safe Needles and Consumption Services: With or Without VIHA by Renée McBeth

Victoria residents from many walks of life sent a clear
message at the May 31st March for Dignity: We want safe
consumption services where they are needed and we want
them now.

The energy at Sunday's march was tremendous and there
was a large show of support for the opening of a guerrilla
needle exchange (referred to by organizers as the GNX) in
Harris Green, half a block from the Vancouver Island Health
Authority's St. Johns Ambulance building and Our Place.

The front page Times Colonist article on the march and GNX
stated that needles were being given out by an elementary
school. The article refers only to the location of St. Andrew's
school and completely ignores these other close and relevant
landmarks.

The GNX ran school hours, from 7 pm-11 pm daily, and
continued 2 days a
week (Sunday and
Wednesday) for the
next few weeks.

Moreover, the
location is central
and easy to access
by folks who need
the service - a fifteen
or twenty-minute
walk to the mobile
needle exchange
van at Princess and
Douglas is simply
too far. Refusing to
provide an essential
service because there
is also a school within
this high-density
downtown area is
simply pretending the need is not there.

I attended Sunday's march after researching the history of
Victoria's needle exchange, reviewing various reports put
out by the city and the Vancouver Island Health Authority
(VIHA), and attending the 'Perspectives' workshop put on

by SOLID (Society of Living Intravenous Drug Users) last
Thursday. To me the research is clear, safe consumption
services are absolutely necessary if we want to contribute
to reducing (or even limiting) increasing HIV/AIDS and
Hepatitis C rates. Safe consumption means giving people
clean supplies and a safe, private place to 'fix' under the
supervision of a nurse. Harm reduction is basic public health
promotion, but more importantly, it is about giving drug users
a little respect and dignity.

While the Cormorant Street needle exchange was
underfunded, understaffed and did not have the capacity to
provide the services staff and community members might
have hoped for, the accounts I heard on the 'peer panel' at
Thursday's workshop made it clear to me that the closure of
the fixed-site needle exchange has been a huge blow to the
street community and people who use illicit
drugs. A fixed site offers
street folks and users non-
judgmental healthcare and
a consistent check-in with
others in the community
and Street Nurses who
are concerned and paying
attention to how they are
doing.

Folks from the peer
program put themselves
on the line every
day doing secondary
distribution of clean rigs
and pick-up of dirties.
While VIHA has spent
the past year 'consulting'
on a new fixed site needle

exchange, community members have been picking up the
slack as best they can. Harm Reduction Victoria has decided
to pitch in too by opening up the GNX and getting people in
Victoria aware of this very current local need and there are a
lot of people who are happy to help them.

Photo from Pete Rockwell.



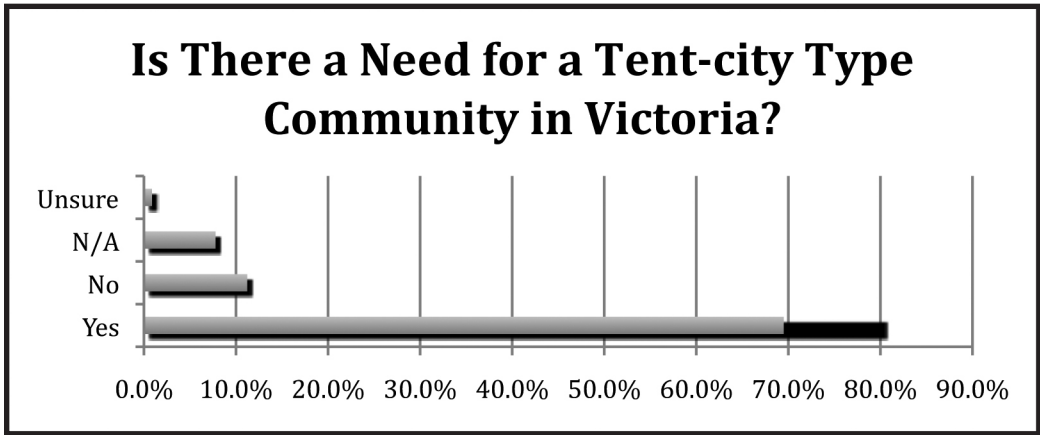
Tent City News

-- continued from cover

While we were excited about the prospects of facilitating the process of creating a user-run ‘tent city’ in Victoria, we had to begin by seeing if there was a need and a desire within our communities. Our first step was to get the opinions of those who matter most – those who would be interested in living in a community of tents or small shelters.

We decided that the best and most inclusive way to hear what people had to say would be to informally interview members of the street community with a basic, simple and flexible survey as a guide. The survey was distributed to people who self-identify as homeless or living in an unstable housing situation. We will use the results of the survey to help ensure that the project is guided by the visions, interests and needs of the communities it will serve.

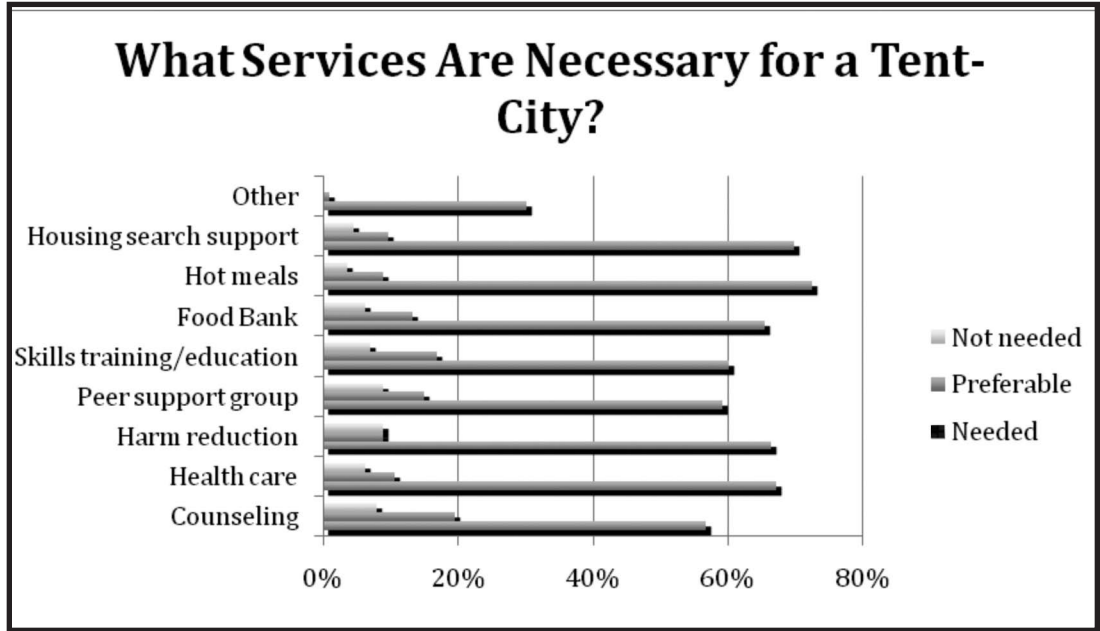
Our humble, grassroots survey collected the reflections and opinions of 116 street-involved individuals, of which 87 folks stated that they are homeless or unstably housed.



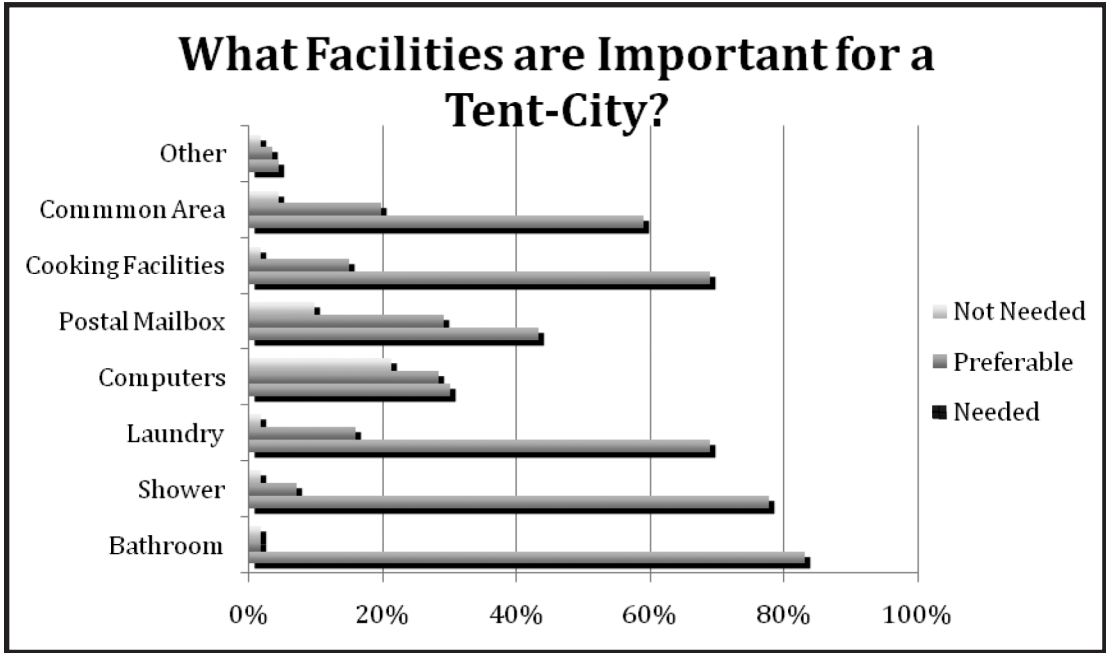
The vast majority of people surveyed, around 80%, stated there is a need for a tent city in Victoria and 83% said that they would support a tent city in Victoria.

Services and Facilities

The survey also asked folks what services and facilities would be “needed,” “preferable,” or “not needed.” The majority of respondents reported that all of the services listed in the survey were necessary. The most important service was hot meals, followed by (in order of priority), housing search support, health care, harm reduction services, a food bank, skills training peer support groups and counseling.



There was more variation in the importance of different facilities than services. The most important facility according to the large majority of those surveyed was bathrooms, followed by showers, cooking facilities, laundry and a common area.



To simplify this chart, the number of people who chose not the answer this question (“n/a”) is not shown.

Best Type of Shelter for a Tent-City

Given the choice between a tent or a portable shack, 45% said they would be willing to live in a tent, but only 24% said this was the best type of shelter for a tent-city. A larger number, 42%, said that the best type of shelter for a tent-city would be some kind of portable shack.

Other Qualities of a Tent-City

Privacy and personal safety came up as the most significant qualities of a tent-city in Victoria, with most respondents saying that it was “important” or “very important” to have private shelter (77%), a private shelter to share (75%) and a place where possessions can be securely locked (83%). Also, more than half of the people surveyed (66%) stated that pets should be allowed.

Generally folks reported that members of the tent-city community should have an obligation to contribute to safety and security, community work and decision-making within the community as well as avoiding alcohol and substance use while on-site.

About half of the people surveyed (53%) said that there should not be a limit on the length of time people can stay in the community, 33% said there should be a time limit and 14% chose not to answer.

For more information, the full TASC report will be available at www.vipirg.ca.

Tamara Herman is Research Coordinator at the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG) and a graduate student at the University Victoria. She has been active for over ten years with a diverse range of groups and collectives working for justice, dignity and self-determination. Although much of her activism has addressed global poverty, militarization and capitalism, she is currently focusing on local poverty issues.



Renée McBeth is a graduate student at the University of Victoria studying political science. She is also a teaching assistant for the free university course University101 and currently working as a co-op student at the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG). She has lived in Victoria for two years.

I’m Working on a Blanket Apology

by Ron Gillmore

I’m sorry that Paul, a chap a few years older than myself and appears to be in better shape than me is begging on the street in Victoria. I pass him every day on my way to work. Paul chain-smokes, looks like he’s tough as nails, and has told me he is dying of cancer. Although I won’t give him cash, I do occasionally buy him a cornish pasty from the Rhineland Bakery because he likes those. I’m sorry I can’t buy him adequate housing or adequate health care or make him better.

I’m sorry that Peter, a young “lazy bum,” lost his leg in the Forestry industry after coming to BC from the Maritimes. He too smokes when he can and I occasionally regret that I gave him a twenty dollar bill because he probably wasted it on some cheap temporary drug to make the pain and loss go away temporarily. Instead of doing something “politically correct” with it.

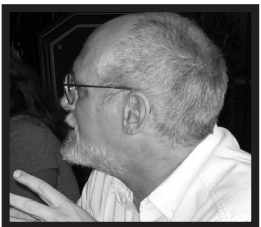
I’m sorry that Patrick, an able-bodied man in his 30s, has spent 8 years on the street and tells me it’s not a bad life and he can’t imagine “working 9 to 5 like those poor people who rush past him every day on their way to their little jobs.” He obviously isn’t thinking right and it will only end badly and I’m sorry I can’t fix his spirit and offer him a life worth living.

I’m sorry that people are thin-skinned and vain and self-satisfied and busy and easily confused and distracted and that they react so poorly when their vanity is pricked. Worse, they tell each other the comforting lies that they learned at their mother’s knee, or their private school, or that they acquired before entering their teen years and have never felt the need to re-examine their “values.”

I’m sorry that my Prime Minister has built a career on narrow self-interest and “old boy” collegiality, and treats any dissent from his view of our world with contempt.

I’m sorry that our Premier felt a need for bread and circuses dressed up as “The Olympics” and is channelling uncountable wealth into this enterprise that will line the pockets of opportunists instead of providing our countrymen and women with things they need far more if they are to actually mature and be a truly civil society.

Ron Gillmore writes seriously with tongue in cheek, changed the names to protect the innocent, and blogs at rongillmore.blogspot.com



Promoting Peace and Harmony on Pandora

I have bi-polar since 1986. I take medication as i should. Life coping skills and proper parenting are essential factors. No one should suffer on the street.

I think that the bottle depot should remain open as long as people don’t sleep on the parking lot overnight. My co-workers live in the area and they are concerned for their safety and how it looks in the neighborhood. There is nothing wrong with this activity as long as everyone gets along.

As a former North Park resident, I wish that this neighborhood could get a “boost” in the right direction. It is disappointing to see all the homeless and others in the drug trade go without homes and medical care. It is very important for all cities to maintain order in the downtown core. There are many folks who “reside” in the doorways and parks around Victoria. There are answers out there but the people directly involved must listen and make an effort towards wellness. You can not save everyone but it is worth the effort to help those who desperately want to get better.

I hope that this summer is about peace and harmony in the 900-block of Pandora Avenue!

Michelle Catharina, Langford

Thoughts about Harm Reduction

Dear Janine,

A number of weeks ago you asked me how I felt about the needle exchange and safe injection site. You seemed to be shocked to hear me explain how I felt that such programs facilitate drug abuse and enable a very harmful, destructive lifestyle.

I still feel uncomfortable with enabling or encouraging drug abuse and addiction. I also feel uncomfortable with people abusing drugs in public places and then disposing of the needles as litter in the streets and gardens. Janitors and gardeners then have to clean up, thus endangering their own well being. I was once one of those people having to do the clean up.

Next time please ask what I think about this issue and then I can explain how I think that harm reduction is a good idea. The needle exchange and safe injection site are part of harm reduction and preventing the spread of AIDS/HIV and Hep C.

There is still a difference between what I feel and what I think, on this issue at least. My heart and my head aren’t in agreement. I’ll leave it to others to decide the right answer. I’m sure that there are people trained in social work with more insight than I do. Do they have the same conflict between the head and the heart?

Robin Kingsley, Sidney

Just Trying to Help

Six years ago I lived on the streets of Victoria. I chose to do this because I had discovered homeless people who thought they had no voice. Not knowing what an advocate was, I tried to be one.

Thanks to the Anti Poverty Society we acquired tents and moved them around. Always being moved on by the police. Eventually they confiscated the tents and all our belongings and took them to the dump.

Meanwhile, I had caught the media’s attention. Maybe it was because we were visiting the then incumbent Mayor Alan Lowe. Or it could have been because of some of the street corner videos we had discussing Gordon Campbell who unhappily has lived up to all my expectations. Contingencies for the rich, and a short rope for the poor. A very short rope - rope costs money after all. Three cheers for cutback Campbell.

Anyways, because of my brief fifteen minutes of fame I was allowed to renovate a condemned house and use it to give shelter to some alcoholics and addicts. Imagine my pride when the mayor and his assistant arrived to view the house. “Good for Pat,” the mayor said. Wow! says I to myself, validation. I don’t really know what I expected. Some kind of help from the powers that were?

Silly me, frolicking in the tulip fields located somewhere in the back of my mind, it took me a while to realize that, like a yappy little doggie, they had thrown me a sticky little bone. And if I hadn’t clued in, the police were more than happy to spell it out if I tried to ask for help in dealing with a tenant too high for his own good.

After me being arrested 90 per cent of the time if I phoned for their help, I stopped phoning. Were the police hoping we would all kill each other?

For four years I ran the house alone, twenty-four hours a day. I gave up the house a year ago, depressed, angry, and burnt out. Not knowing if I’d done more harm than good. Knowing the people I cared about most disliked me because of the strict rules I had to enforce to keep them safe. Well, to hell with it, the cops can taser me again (5 times at once) I ended up in the hospital. The can pepper spray me as they did repeatedly.

My mouth is open, and I’m yapping again. I have a voice, we all do. Let’s unite in one righteous song. Decency. I know all about man’s inhumanity to man. Beat, idealist that i’m proud to be, I believe we can look beyond ourselves and reach out to each other with love and compassion. For the sake of our world, for the future of humanity, let’s help each other change and love, just because.

Patricia, Victoria



Perspectives: About Hep C, HIV, and Safer Drug Use

PERSPECTIVES: A SOLID sponsored workshop held on 28 May 09 in the 1st Metropolitan United Church. SOLID stands for Society of Living Intravenous Drug Users. This workshop was supported by Cool Aid Community Health Clinic, Harm Reduction Victoria and AIDS Vancouver Island. I attended this workshop as an interested member of the public.

I learned a lot about the impact of drugs on Victoria. I learned that intravenous drug use cannot be eliminated. Thus we have to reduce its impacts with a harm reduction program.

The high cost of drugs, the loading of our ambulance services, our emergency rooms and hospitals, the large number of homeless drug users, and other costs such as increased policing and cleaning costs means that every means possible to reduce the number of new HIV cases must be taken now. From the workshop I learned that a needle exchange program is crucial to reduce the transmission of HIV and hepatitis C. The fixed needle exchange sites also provide essential information to drug users and increase the opportunities for referral to health and social services. They and the street nurses from Cool Aid and VIHA provide an essential link between drug users and our health services.

I learned that mobile needle exchanges cannot be a replacement for a fixed site facilities. Rather, integrated multi-fixed sites supported by mobile needle exchanges are required to reach the estimated 1500 to 2000 intravenous drug users in Victoria. 24/7 services have to be provided among the various fixed and mobile needle exchanges to meet the need. Needle exchange perhaps could be incorporated into other social service outlets

I was shocked to learn that there have been 10 different reports on needle exchanges in the past seven years. The conclusions of all the reports are consistent.

Now is the time for action. I recommend that the staffs of the City of Victoria and VIHA be directed to review all the reports and other relevant information including direct inputs from organizations such as SOLID to present costed options to meet the need for needle exchanges in Victoria by 1 Sep 09.

Gerry Masuda, Duncan



The Genes Are Too Tight

by Brian Mason

If it’s true, as biologist E.O. Wilson has argued, that humans are evolved to make short-term decisions and to focus on local concerns, then we require systems of governance to counteract our instincts. Wilson’s other chief point is relevant here too: there has never been an altruistic species, and humans are no exception. Humans, that is, deal with one another “by reciprocity”: I’ll scratch your back, if you’ll scratch mine.

Unfortunately for us, all our political and economic systems mirror our instincts. This is hardly surprising. After all, they were “designed” by us in the first place, and we run them. How else could it be?

Governments, municipal, provincial and federal, work on short three- to five-year cycles, while corporations get by on quarter-year results. Civic organizations, such as your local community centre, do their summing-up once a year. Because none of us lives for long – though much longer on average than our ancestors – these near horizons make sense on an individual and daily basis. How else to approach the world when your lifespan is measured in decades?

How else, indeed. Unfortunately, the rise both of modern, complex societies and of advanced capitalism – which has brought a quadrupling of world population over the last 100 years – has resulted in a pincer movement on us. As Wilson said, “[W]e are wired to make the wrong choices.” A “how else” must be found soon, or else.

These circumstances – complex societies, advanced capitalism, a large human population and unfortunate human instincts – are a bad mix. They are ratcheting us closer and faster towards the abyss of disaster than has any previous combination of circumstances in human history. We are in desperate need of a referee. And I don’t mean the Second Coming.

The modern nation state, where complex societies have been nurtured, is a yesterday development in the human journey. Not long ago, it would have been inconceivable to imagine a stable, enduring sovereign entity with a liberal- or social-democratic form of government extending over a pluralistic territory. Kings and tyrants could pull off the territorial part for awhile, but stability and security were not often the bywords of their day. No sooner had Alexander the Great been laid out in a magnificent hearse for his final trip to Egypt than his “empire” fell apart. His legacy was not untypical.

For most of recorded history (including the period of nation states), Europe has been a brutally feuding patchwork of shifting boundaries. Other continents have fared little better, save Antarctica. To take just one small example closer to home, consider Canadian historian H.V. Nelles’s description of New France in the mid-18th century: “Skirmishes, raids, battles, and military preparations for battles were normal features of life all along the disputed borders ...” Nonetheless, for all its relative sophistication as a polity, the modern nation state (democratic or otherwise) has not saved us from ourselves. It has done little more than let us indulge our instincts on a larger and bloodier playing field.

If democratic nation states have failed to soothe the savage beast of humankind, perhaps a world state would do the trick. There has been no shortage of dreams and schemes of world government, though serious attempts to build one have been understandably few. (Think League of Nations and United Nations. It’s just that these structures – toothless, bureaucratic window-dressing – haven’t worked well at all.) The World Federalists, with fewer than 50,000 supporters worldwide, have taken on the lofty aim of bringing about “democratic, federal government for our largest community, the world.” George Monbiot, no whimsical idealist, made a sensible, detailed proposal for world government in his 2003 book Manifesto for a New World Order. He made it sound easy, for something never done before and which would give new dimensions to Utopia. German social theorist Jurgen Habermas, opposed to nationalism and the nation state, who has strongly influenced a generation of philosophers, also throws his lot in with those wishing for a democratic world federation. For him, the European Union represents the fragile beginning of such a model. Then there is the World Social Forum, which for all its merits is only a gathering – albeit of leftist social activists and movements – not a government. Nor does it plan to become one.

Imagining world government – even a nicely crafted, democratic one – is not the problem, nor are crude attempts at moving the concept ahead. Rather, it’s the checkmate continuously hovering over all such ambitions which lays the matter to rest. World government would not work any better – and likely much worse – than any form of government now in place on a smaller scale because of how humans are evolved. Remember: short term, close to home – that’s how humans think and act. Without compunction, too. Once we were to take the reins – or is it reigns? – of the spanking new world federation, our instincts would kick in. We would not suddenly begin making decisions with the next seven generations uppermost in our minds. After all, they are not in a position to scratch our backs. And the folks in Darfur still wouldn’t count for as much as those closer to home. That’s the way it is. We are not altruistic in a sustained, unambiguous way. Consequently there is no way that our systems, whether large or small, designed and run by us as they are, can serve altruistic purposes. Even if we pretend otherwise.

The problem of governance is immense, and likely insoluble. How can we, in spite of our genes, design, build and operate systems of governance and economics that compensate for our natural shortcomings and inabilities? If anyone has an answer, please lay out the details in a letter to Street Newz.

Submitted by Brian Mason, a philosopher and writer living in James Bay.



What if?

by Rob Mason

Of all the visions I upheld for myself through my life previous - repulsive and contemptible had not numbered among them - though they now were my constant companions. There may have been moments when, like anyone else, I subject myself to the sort of criticism I would never heap on another. This was long before my life unfolded to reflect the present reality whereby, in order to continue to pan myself with a critical eye, there would need to be present enough caring about or hope that it could be any different - that was one of the numerous deaths I experienced on my descent into oblivion - where I apparently vanished as a member of humanity but not quite far enough to escape the scrutiny and judgment of the public eye.

For even from the dark recesses of my urban refuge - where I attempt to cheat the winter rain from its indiscriminate assault on my being - should I care to look up and you dare to make eye contact, I can see by your expression you have assessed that which you look upon as being subhuman. My retreat has been so complete and so deep within the abyss of my own mind that the cold indifference of your glare is woefully inadequate to gain entrance beyond the fortification of this psychological safe haven cum prison. Should this alone prove ineffective - as it inevitably will, there is at my disposal access to all forms of analgesic comfort - readily available (for a price) to those who inhabit the alleyways and gutters of the inner city once all ‘respectable’ life has retired to their homes. So while you rely on your physician to be your ‘pusher’ we on the streets have our own ‘Pharmacare.’ For my purposes it is in many ways superior: the drugs far surpass anything available by prescription and are dispensed without judgment - one need only be prepared to pay the going rate and there you have it - no questions asked. It is far too late by the time one realizes the price they will truly pay!

The main distinction between me and you is that I am in a great deal of pain and have lost all pretence with regard to escaping that reality - you, on the other hand, must be in a great deal of pain as well otherwise there would be no need for someone with so much to vilify someone with virtually nothing - the difference is I see your pain - you are unwilling to acknowledge mine.

Consider if you will the profound pain - ever-present - stemming from the varying forms of assault visited upon my being (mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual). Imagine a pain so all encompassing that even potentially lethal combinations of drugs and alcohol can keep it at bay only for short respites. Then when exhaustion finally sets in - rest and ‘comfort’ is sought upon a concrete walkway- ah but good fortune is afoot - the one with the awning is available.

Still given this, some of society’s most educated maintain that this is a simple matter of choice and that there are those who have ‘got what is coming to them.’

There is a certain bitter irony present in a society that first abandons the homeless and then condones the continuance of ever increasing numbers of their fellow human beings joining their ranks, where they are left to die in the streets. Yet, endless is the cry that those on the street be prosecuted to the full extent of the law (laws that were enacted to ‘protect’ all members of our community) should they ever be in breach of said law while attempting to eek out their very continued existence.

The status quo takes the form of a gun aimed directly at the heads of the homeless - continued acceptance of this reality - slides a cartridge in the chamber - if collectively we turn and walk the other way - we have now pulled the trigger.

The illusion of ‘us’ as a caring society can now be pronounced dead.

Rob has found that 22 years in recovery lends to an affinity for those on the street still in the throws of their addictions. A recent stint unemployed and a sober (pun intended) second look at his life (due to a marriage ending) have led to both a discovery of a love for writing and a desire to contribute in some way to being part of the solution to homelessness. Rob recently completed training with the “Mentoring Project” (matches volunteers as mentors to someone in recovery - substance use and/or mental health issues), and volunteered in varying capacities with “creatinghomefulness society” (preparing now to set up Woodwynn farm as a Therapeutic Farm).

Sometimes as I’m walking down the street I look at the people passing by and wonder what they are feeling inside. Having gone through some painful experiences in my own life and carried on, I wonder how many of those I see are stumbling along in their own individual pain. We often present a image to the world that conceals the inner turmoil in our lives. We hide our pain from others in part because revealing our weakness puts us in a state where we are vulnerable to getting hurt even more. If we could see trauma as a visible manifestation, how many of those we encounter every day would be in a state of terrible injury—crippled and bleeding—yet valiantly carrying on with their lives despite their need for healing relief?

I work with clients who struggle with the legacy of painful emotional experiences. These traumas may have happened many years before. Sometimes the damage happens repeatedly such as chronic abuse in family situations. Other times the trauma is a single incident that leaves a permanent damaging mark. Our strongest memories are emotional ones, with painful memories having the greatest imprint. Those painful reminders are designed to keep us safe and secure. When we encounter a situation that is similar to how a painful memory was created, those painful emotions come back to remind us to be careful—that there is danger that we need to be aware of.

That emotional trigger mechanism can be quite helpful. If we were hurt by getting hit by a car while riding our bike, we may experience reminders of that danger when riding afterwards, prompting us to be more aware and careful of cars on every subsequent bicycle ride. Those prompts reduce the likelihood of getting hurt again in the same way. We might even find that in similar situations, such as walking around cars, we might also be more aware and careful. The end goal of that emotional memory mechanism is to increase our likelihood of surviving and thriving.

But sometimes emotional memories cripple our lives. The cyclist’s useful awareness of car danger may become so strong that it becomes terror and that cyclist may eventually stop riding altogether. The cyclist is now cut off from a source of happiness.

We may have had painful relationship experiences, such as an abusive parent or partner. When we start a new relationship with someone else, similarities with the painful relationship may trigger the same emotional feelings and warnings of danger, hampering our ability to achieve the closeness and joy we want in the new relationship.

And yet going back to those painful memories may only reinforce the pain, opening up those wounds again and preventing us from the healing we desire. Sometimes we may go through those memories, dredging them up in attempt to get over what has happened to us. But instead of healing we find the pain, trauma and other negative emotions such as anger and helplessness all come back, just as strong as before. It’s almost like taking a cut and cutting it again, so that it never heals. Sometimes we don’t want to heal—-we might use the trauma to feed our anger about our lives. We get stuck in the past, unable to move forward. And while moving forward can be a scary thing, until we let go of the past we cannot fully embrace the joys that exist in the present.

Let me give you an example that I hope is not too simplistic. Several years ago, Jane had a roommate Donna. At first Jane and Donna got along quite well, but over a period of months their relationship deteriorated with arguments over playing music, keeping the place tidy, and having friends over. One day Donna attacked Jane in her room and physically assaulted her, leaving Jane with a black eye and scratches and bruises over her body. The roommates split up, but the legacy of that experience remains.

Now Jane may choose to channel the negative energy of the aftermath of her experience into anger at

Donna. She shares the pain of that experience with others, telling her story in an attempt to unburden herself. Yet at the same time she is increasing the negative emotions associated with the fight. She ends up keeping that trauma fresh. It never heals and Jane becomes stuck in the past, unable to move on in her life. She lets that anger build and build until it consumes her completely. Although Jane may want to heal, she also feeds on that negative energy, using

emotion, we are unstuck and can freely move forward in our lives.

In working with Jane, I would first help her get into that relaxed mental and physical state of hypnosis. Then I would help her go back to the time she was assaulted. At that point we can shift the energy of the experience.

We could change the content by changing what happened. Perhaps she has her favorite dog from her childhood in her room who helps her feel safe and prevents the attack from happening. Instead Jane and Donna are able to talk and decide peacefully to no longer live together. They part ways amicably.

We could change the context by changing how Jane understood the experience. Maybe Jane would remember some of the experiences that Donna had shared where Donna had been abused as a child. Donna had been triggered by some things Jane did as a roommate, and when Donna attacked Jane she was really fighting the demons from her abusive past. Jane could understand that the attack was part of the process of Donna’s own journey to healing. Jane could let the negative energy of her attack flow to the intended target, which would be Donna’s childhood abuser. Allowing that negative energy to flow away from her allows Jane to forgive Donna for the attack. Forgiveness of both ourselves and others is part of the healing process and I try to incorporate forgiveness into changing the experience.

By changing the content or the context of the experience in hypnotherapy, Jane is able to release the negative emotions of the experience. Now Jane still remembers being assaulted—the real experience still remains—but the emotions of that event are now gone. It’s more like reading or watching a movie about something that happened to someone else. And with that emotional release, the triggers no longer occur. Jane is no longer stuck in anger or fear. Jane is able to move on with her life.

Releasing the negative emotions of the past is one thing I facilitate as a hypnotherapist, but it is something you can try at home. Start by getting into a comfortable position in a quiet and safe area. Close your eyes and calm your body, staying focused on your breathing. Then let your mind go back to that experience that has been bothering you and ask yourself, “How would I change this experience so I would feel better?” Avoid changing the experience so that others are harmed. So, for example, if someone has hurt you, don’t try to hurt them back. Be creative—whatever you can imagine is possible. And at the end you may find that some or all of that negative emotion has been released. And with that release of emotion you can focus on all the wonderful positives that exist in our lives.

It’s my hope that we all can release ourselves from the bondage of the negatives in our past. While pain is part of life, we can be free from its slavery and instead open ourselves to all the positive energy that life has to offer.

Kurt Lenfesty is a clinical hypnotherapist practicing on Cormorant Street. His work focuses on resolving past traumas, reducing stress and anxiety, pain relief and overcoming obstacles to life success. Kurt has found that hypnotherapy works quite well in dealing with emotion-based issues. All hypnosis is self-hypnosis and Kurt works to facilitate the natural ability contains within our own minds to achieve our highest potential. Kurt also practices foot reflexology and hot and cool stone massage therapy, which are both excellent ways to relax and bring the body into balance. He can be reached at 250-884-9633 or by email at Kurt@TotalHypnotherapy.ca or by visiting his website at www.TotalHypnotherapy.ca. He is a board member of the Victoria Community Health Cooperative which can be found at www.VictoriaHealthCooperative.ca.



The Legacy of Trauma

by Kurt Lenfesty

it to power her life. She becomes an angry bitter person whose dark view of life drives away others and prevents her from having any happiness at all.

Jane might make a different choice, choosing to move on and try to forget the experience. But she finds that in certain situations the emotional triggers come back. Jane finds that being in an enclosed space like an elevator with other people produces a lot of stress. When she lives with other people she finds that she has a constant feeling of being unsafe. She ends up staying in her locked bedroom most of the time. She finds that she can’t sustain intimate relationships because the physical closeness of a partner triggers strong feelings of anxiety and a urge to run away. She starts to anticipate that certain situations, like being in



an elevator with other people, are going to be anxious. And anticipating anxiety just makes the experience even more stressful. Eventually Jane may find that some days the fear of leaving her room becomes too much, and she will stay in her room all day. The legacy of her trauma is now crippling her ability to have happiness in her life.

How can Jane get past her trauma and move on?

As a hypnotherapist I’m concerned with healing. I have a strong desire that my clients heal from their traumas. I join with their goals of moving forward in their lives, leaving behind the traumas of the past and embracing life in its joys more fully. With trauma the goal is to release that negative emotional energy that is stored in our memories so that we don’t get triggered in our daily lives. In hypnotherapy I take the client back to the experience and then change that experience in one of two ways: I help the client change the content of the experience or the context of the experience. Changing the content of the experience means changing what happened. Changing the context of the experience means changing how the client understands what happened. By going back to the experience and shifting it, the negative emotional energy gets released. The memory remains the same, but the emotion is gone. And with that release of

The British Museum Exhibit

by Jennifer Hastie

Hey Couz, have you seen the new stuff in our Museum? Really, you should make a trip to town to do this. It’s an astounding display of artefacts from all over the world. It’s a journey into the past, when the Brits were out pillaging and looting, along with the rest of Europe. Heck, Couz, even a Nuu-chah-nulth bowl came across the ocean to be displayed, right on the doorstep of their traditional territory! However much you disagree with what the Brits have done in the past, this exhibit is amazing to see; every piece is in beautiful shape and it gives us an inkling of how many nations the Brits have ruled in past years.

I had mixed feelings, walking through this display. Although it allows the likes of us to take in the history and beauty of other cultures, the reality is that it is really all about conquering other peoples. It is all about war and killings and pillaging. Britain claims that it is ethically okay to keep these treasures, even in this day and age. They claim that their famous museum is a “world museum,” allowing them to have the right to these treasures in order to teach others about world history. For example, the Elgin Marbles. (no Couz, they did NOT come with this exhibit...) If you want to learn more about the Elgin Marbles, Wikipedia can fill you in. I recently read about the British viewpoint in a brochure produced, of course, because of the on-going war that Greece is having with Britain over the loss of their Elgin Marbles.

As we strolled through this wonderful display of cultural artefacts, each one chosen with great care to represent a culture from times past, I was continually thinking about First Nations’ Peoples in North America since the time of Columbus’ “discovery.” At first, as you know, Couz, Natives from all over North America were initially friendly to any newcomers, whoever they were. In fact, there are lots of examples of Natives helping the white settlers out. For example, between 1755 and 1762—the Brits were then fighting with the French in Acadia—the Mi’kmaqs kept 10,000 French alive because the French were doomed to die, having been kicked out of their settlement(s) by the English. Other examples of Indians helping the newcomers out have been documented many times; the Mikmaq example just comes to mind because the incident was recently mentioned in one of the documentaries presently being shown on the “500 Nations” series on the APTN television channel.

Settlers began to eliminate various first nations’ cultures because they wanted their land. I am speaking of those next generations of English settlers who formed the USA and who were still greedy for land. Plans to eliminate these cultures took lots of forms, from outright bounty on Indian heads in California (a different price for a female, or a child, or a man) to deliberately lacing Indian blankets with smallpox during the 1760s. And did you know that the Buffalo were apparently deliberately killed off in order to stamp out the Plains tribes? Imagine going to that extent. A pity, isn’t it, that the preservationists don’t mourn the loss of those First Nations peoples the way that they now mourn the loss of the Buffalo.

Yes, the treatment of Native Americans was worse down there than up here in western Canada. As well, the Spanish were even WORSE to those of Indian Ancestry in Central and South America. It’s kind of crazy to be analyzing who was the worst offender of the European Colonialists. Our own history is not so pretty either, for the Residential Schools provided a slow way of dying, this time killing the spirit, the culture and the parenting of all our First Nations’ peoples.

The Indian spirit has not died. Furthermore, because treaties were never signed in most parts of B.C., our area has become a battleground over land claims. Because this battle is taking place in modern times, there are now lawyers around who are “allowed” to take these cases to court. (yes, Couz, there was even a time when our native peoples, for example the Huu-ay-aht from near Bamfield, were not allowed to hire lawyers to defend any legal land claims). As we stall, the Indian only gets stronger.

Let us rise to the occasion and “do the right thing.” Only then, will our First Peoples find peace, peace because they have been finally heard. Peace, because they have been finally respected. Only then, can their healing journey begin.

Jennifer Hastie is a Senior who lives in Victoria and who continues to write to her Couz about First Nations Peoples.



Mohawks Say: Don’t Bring Your Guns to Town, Boys!

by Kahentinetha



MNN. June 9, 2009. The cards have been thrown on the floor. This is how they are landing, whether accidental or intentional. It’s a businessmen’s war and they want to sacrifice the people.

Mohawks telling the world to put their guns down is throwing a big monkey wrench into the works. The capitalist war thugs are having a hard time calling us terrorists if we don’t want guns or bombs or the arms race.

Canada’s Minister of Public Safety, Peter Van Loan, told the Mohawks of Akwesasne, “We won’t remove the blockade around you until you let us come in with our guns.” Peter, you sound like the president of the National Rifle Association. Why don’t you get a job selling guns at Wal Mart?

There’s something odd going on here. People are asking, “How many Canada Border Services Agents CBSA have been shot or killed?” None! How many Indigenous have been abused by border agents at Akwesasne? Hundreds!

We, the Haudenosaunee are the legal sovereigns of Great Turtle Island. Canada has no jurisdiction over us or our territory. It’s a nation-to-nation issue which they have to respect if they are to act legally.

The US and Europe have always maintained their power through stealing the resources of other people. Their decline is the result of losing their colonies. They want to become world powers again by starting new colonial empires through selling sophisticated military equipment. Control is by supplying armaments and technicians to military and para military forces in the worldwide market.

The need for arms is being created by maintaining that there are terrorist threats around everywhere. They don’t want harmony between nations. US and Europe, the two main war economies, are competing for customers. Trillions of dollars are at stake to build jets, tanks and armaments. The US had a monopoly on making and selling arms around the world until their economic decline. They are losing their clout, customers and credibility. They can’t let anybody else sell war equipment to their cartels, especially in South America. They’re struggling to maintain control over a high population of Indigenous who are resisting exploitation.

Canada wants guns at the border. They’ll start with pistols, then bazookas and then tanks and surveillance towers. 1,500 armed soldiers could be put along the Canada/US border. Supplying armaments and building walls on the borders is a multi billion dollar business. It’s meant to create an atmosphere of fear between countries.

Mohawks are caught in the middle. It’s strange that our message that there shall be no guns is seen as repugnant. It goes against their agenda to demonize us.

History repeats itself. The colonists used the military to exploit us, kill us off and take everything we had. Now they want to do it worldwide. Natural resources are getting scare. Any place they can find it, they will get it, by hook or mostly by crook.

The Mohawks are true to the legacy and heritage of our people. Long ago, Dekanawida, the peacemaker, brought a message to the Rotino,shonni:onwi to stop all warfare. He was born into warring nations. He helped bring the message of peace. Mohawks are showing colonial society for what they are, a corrupt power that intimidates and has no compassion.

They want a worldwide police state where only government agents, military and para-military forces have guns and military equipment to control and shoot people.

The Mohawks say, “There will be no guns. There will be no guns!” So we are blocked in by armed force.

Mohawk Nation News (www.mohawknationnews.com) began during the Mohawk/Oka crisis of 1990 by providing updates on the resistance. MNN grew to become an internationally recognized news service providing independent indigenous commentary on Kanion’ke:Haka/Mohawk land, legal, culture, history, and current issues as they affect the nation.

this page is devoted to the life of Harriet Nahanee

From Wikipedia: Harriet Nahanee (1935 - Feb 24 2007) was an Indigenous rights activist, residential school survivor, and environmental activist. She comes from the Pacheedaht, part of the Nuu-chah-nulth Indigenous peoples of Vancouver Island. She married into the Skwx_wú7mesh (Squamish).

Harriet was sentenced to jail for criminal contempt of court for her part in the [2010 Olympics preparatory] Sea-to-Sky Highway-expansion protest at Eagleridge Bluffs [despite a warning to the judge from Betty Krawczyk about Harriet's ill health and the poor prison conditions]. Harriet was hospitalized with pneumonia at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver just one month after her original sentencing.

An independent public inquiry into Harriet's passing was called for in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Solicitor-General John Les said the provincial government expressed "regret" for the passing but denied any government responsibility and refused opposition requests for an inquiry.

photo: Harriet (left) and Betty confront the authorities at Eagleridge Bluffs.



*“Into the breach, dear friends,
once more into the breach”*

by Betty Krawczyk

I can't identify who first said these words but I like them. They're emotional words. Fighting words. There's a struggle woven in between these words coupled with somebody's tired determination not to give it up. And neither can we give it up. Ever. Even when things look bleak. Why? Because there aren't any other alternatives but to keep on going. If we stop 'going on' so to speak, we die.

Recently I lost my appeal in the Appeal's Court of BC. This appeal originated in the protests and arrests in Eagleridge Bluffs which left me with a ten month's prison sentence. Which I served. But in my appeal I said people have a right to protest needless governmental destruction of our priceless eco systems no matter how much press and media attend a protest; but the court said no, if there's press and media attending a blockade that makes a protester guilty of criminal contempt of court and anyone who speaks to the press while on a blockade is a criminal. With a criminal mind (mens rea) no less.

This is just the most maddening thing. This means that while I was designated a criminal with a criminal mind and given a lengthy criminal sentence and sent to a place where other criminals are kept I was told by the appeals the court that the term "criminal contempt" was simply a term used by BC courts but it didn't really mean I was a regular criminal. Then how come I was tried and convicted like a regular criminal and sent off to prison? I don't get it. I've come to believe that when confronted with a prisoner who has disobeyed a court order (at least a court order allowing the destruction of our environment) BC judges' minds automatically hit a short circuit that creates some kind of cranial electrical storm. Give them mass murders any ole day, they seem to say, or extortionists, or the most vicious gang members, child pornographers, or whatever, and they will be treated much more tenderly by the courts in BC than an environmental proteste

But we can't stop. If there is any room for me to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada I will. We must all prepare to go "into the breach, dear friends, once more into the breach." Whenever and whatever way we can manage to do it.

Betty Krawczyk is an eighty year old great grandmother who has seen the inside of too many jail cells for her efforts to protect BC's beautiful wild places. She blogs at bettysearlyedition.blogspot.com.



ACTIVISTS FLAME THE TORCH

The Royal Bank-sponsored 'Olympic Torch Practice Run' was greeted at its first stop by a 'Practice Protest' in downtown Victoria on the morning of May 21st. The 'Olympic Torch Welcoming Committee' wielded banners, signs, and noisemakers to 'practice' protesting the Olympic Torch relay.

The Committee welcomed the Torch on behalf of:

- The homeless, who could be housed for a fraction of what the Torch Relay is costing taxpayers;
- First Nations people, whose land rights are still violated daily;
- Social justice activists, who are facing harassment and surveillance;
- The missing and murdered women of BC, who apparently don't rate the investigation they deserve;
- Our children and grandchildren, who will still be paying for this extravagance years from now;
- And everyone who values free speech and a free society.

Chief of Police Jamie Graham warned activists gathered inside the bank that they would be arrested if they 'defaced' property after one person wrote "No Olympics on Stolen Land" on a banner made available for public signing. Other members of the Olympic Torch Welcoming Committee were expelled from the public celebrations inside RBC by Victoria police and private security guards for carrying anti-Olympic signs drawn on cardboard.

On the street outside the Fort and Douglas RBC location, protesters were under the close surveillance of uniformed and plain-clothed police. "We're quite surprised that a group of 30 Victoria residents with hand-painted banners, signs and one megaphone merited such a hefty security presence," said No 2010 Victoria organizer Tamara Herman. "We could think of better ways of spending the \$1 billion security bill for the 2010 Olympics. Then again, we could also think of better ways of spending the \$500,000 that the City of Victoria has put aside for the Torch Relay."

The official Torch Relay begins October 30 at Mile Zero and travels across Canada until the 2010 Games begin in February. Rumour has it the Olympic Committee is planning the relay route to include Bear Mountain Resort, a controversial development on an 8,000-year-old native site in Langford.

The Olympic Torch Welcoming Committee would also like to recognize Royal Bank for its contribution to the Alberta tar sands. RBC has underwritten millions of dollars worth of water pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and toxic waste. On behalf of hundreds of dead, oiled ducks, we would like to award RBC the title of Canada's Most Toxic Bank. And give it the Torch.

The Olympic Torch Welcoming Committee is not intending to break any laws, and they do have the BC Civil Liberties Association on speed dial.

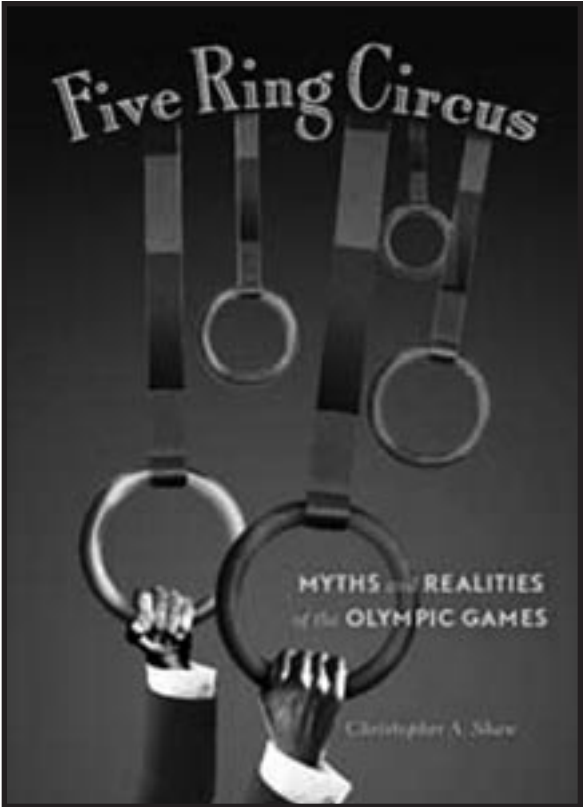
Story from No 2010 Victoria
Photo from Pete Rockwell



"The Olympic Games are often regarded as a gift to host cities ... Chris Shaw succeeds in tearing away the public relations wrapping and IOC ribbons ... with well-worded precision, he examines the real prize inside, meant for developers and insiders: a count-down clock wired to a civic incendiary device."

Geoff Olson, Common Ground Magazine.

Five Ring Circus is available at www.newsociety.com.





9/11: One of History’s Greatest Frauds

(First of Four Parts)

by Gordon Pollard

As veteran Canadian journalist Barrie Zwicker notes in his book Towers of Deception, the key to understanding the realities of 9/11 is to recognize that sometimes what we think is happening in the world or what we are officially told is happening is not what is really happening at all. The legendary American humorist Will Rogers summed it up perfectly many years ago when he said: “It isn’t what we don’t know that gives us trouble. It’s what we know that ain’t so.”

Like millions of others around the world, I was initially in a state of shock and disbelief when I heard about the planes hitting the towers and I wondered what was happening. Before long, however, we, the great unwashed, “knew” what was happening because the ever-helpful U.S. authorities and mainstream media told us.

We “knew” that Arab terrorists had hijacked two planes in Boston and crashed them into the twin towers. Later we “knew” other Arab terrorists had hijacked a plane at Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C., and crashed it into the Pentagon. And we “knew” yet another group of Arab terrorists had hijacked a plane in Newark, N.J., but that group had been overpowered by some passengers and the plane had crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Before the day was done, we also “knew” the twin towers had collapsed due to damage caused by fires and the impact of the planes. And we “knew” another office tower, which had not been struck by any aircraft, had nonetheless collapsed because of fire damage.

On the surface, what we “knew” about 9/11 seemed plausible and, in an atmosphere of fear and hysteria, the authorities had little trouble “selling” this official version to the public. Indeed, as psychologist Kevin Barrett has noted, the events of 9/11 were so shocking and traumatic for most people that their rational thought processes were temporarily paralyzed. They were put in a state of “mass hypnosis” in which they were told not only that they must believe the official story of 9/11 unquestioningly but that they must also dismiss any critics of the official story as crackpots, conspiracy-nuts or even terrorist sympathizers. “This message,” says Barrett, “was powerfully imprinted on the collective consciousness, and this is why so many otherwise rational people have believed the official story of 9/11 for so long, in the teeth of overwhelming evidence against it.”

But if we take the time to carefully examine the available 9/11 evidence in an honest, open-minded way – and if we cast aside the ridiculous you’re-with-us-or-you’re-against-us mantra – it becomes simply impossible to believe the official version any longer. It becomes clear, as Will Rogers might have said, that most of what we initially thought we “knew” about 9/11 “ain’t” really so.

There are literally hundreds of examples of things we “knew” about 9/11 that have turned out to be completely untrue. Let’s look now at five of these examples, and we will look at a further five examples in each of the August, September and October editions of *Victoria Street Newz*.

Gordon Pollard, who is a native of Victoria, has a MA in History from Columbia University in New York City and a BA in History and English from the University of Victoria. After working for 10 years as a journalist in B.C., Alberta, and Ontario, Gordon spent 20 years teaching English and History in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

- We “knew” all 19 of the 9/11 “hijackers” were fanatically anti-American Arabs who “craved death” and happily perished in their suicide mission.

Actually, however, at least six of these “suicide hijackers” turned up very much alive after 9/11, including Abdul Aziz Al-Omari, who was found working as an engineer at Saudi Telecom in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and Saeed Al-Ghamdi, who was working as a pilot for Saudi Airlines based in Jeddah. At the time of 9/11 Al-Ghamdi was in Tunisia participating in a training course for pilots. He was understandably more than a little shocked when friends came rushing up to him with a newspaper showing his picture on the front page and describing him as an international terrorist and mass murderer.

- Another alleged “hijacker,” Salem Al-Hamzi, was also more than a little disturbed since he has never set foot in the United States before or since 9/11. But some of Al-Hamzi’s identification documents had gone missing in Riyadh and he had wondered what happened to them. On 9/11 he found out. As yet another of the alleged “hijackers,” Ahmed Al-Nami, has wryly noted: “The very fact that I’m still alive is pretty good evidence that I didn’t take part in any suicide mission on 9/11.”

Clearly, this should be a matter of great concern to everyone who believes in basic human rights. Monumental apologies are owed to these men whose identities were “hijacked” to facilitate the 9/11 fraud and whose images will forever be associated, however unjustly, with the horrendous crimes of 9/11.

- We “knew” the dour, sinister-looking “lead hijacker” Mohamed Atta was a fanatical Muslim fundamentalist who was determined to strike a blow against the “decadent Americans” and was getting help from Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network.

Actually, however, it turns out Atta was not exactly Allah’s most devout, ascetic warrior. In fact, he spent much less time reading the Koran than he did partying, drinking, womanizing and dabbling in cocaine and other drugs. Between May and August, 2001, this supposedly “rigorously fundamentalist Muslim” made at least six trips to Las Vegas, during which he drank alcohol, sometimes ate pork, gambled and frequented

strip clubs, where he reportedly enjoyed having lap dances performed for him. He even spent some time living with a prostitute. All of this is well documented by Daniel Hopsicker, who interviewed many people who knew Atta.

Atta was well known to both U.S. and Pakistani intelligence agencies, and received financial backing, not from Al Qaeda, but from Pakistan’s military intelligence agency ISI, which has close links to the American CIA. Indeed, the ISI chief, General Mahmoud Ahmad, personally arranged to have \$100,000 wired to Atta’s bank account in Florida shortly before 9/11.

- We “knew” the 9/11 “attacks” were master-minded by remote-control from Afghanistan by Osama bin Laden whom the United States considered the world’s number-one terrorist and was making every effort to capture or kill.

In reality, it is now clear that the let’s-hung-down-the-evil-Osama campaign was nothing more than a diversionary charade. Though bin Laden remains a shadowy figure, enough evidence has now come to light to indicate that he has had a long, cozy relationship with the American CIA and that the two have been quite willing to wheel and deal with each other whenever it was mutually advantageous.

Astonishingly, in July, 2001, bin Laden even received kidney-dialysis treatment at the American Hospital in Dubai and had discussions at that time with a senior CIA official Larry Mitchell. And on September 10, 2001 – the day before 9/11 – bin Laden received further kidney-dialysis treatment in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, at a military hospital which has close ties to the U.S. Pentagon. Moreover, according to Leili Helms, who served as an unofficial U.S. liaison to the Taliban while it was in power in Afghanistan, the U.S. repeatedly turned down numerous offers by the Taliban to extradite bin Laden, who was residing in Afghanistan at the time.

The implications are, of course, shocking: both the general “war on terrorism” and the specific war against the Taliban in Afghanistan appear to be based on a totally fraudulent foundation. Prime Minister Harper no doubt prays every day most Canadians remain blissfully unaware that Afghanistan was invaded not to fight terrorism by as part of a plan to gain control of the multi-billion-dollar energy resources of the Middle East and Central Asia. If most Canadians – especially the families of soldiers killed or maimed

in Afghanistan – understood what really happened on 9/11 and the real reason for invading Afghanistan, Harper and his ministers would be hard pressed to flee the angry mobs that would be storming Parliament Hill. We will look at the connection between 9/11 and the bogus “war” in Afghanistan in more detail later.

- We “knew” the U.S. military was caught completely off guard on 9/11 and didn’t have jets ready to intercept the hijacked planes.

Actually, this is utter nonsense. The U.S. Air Force had at least 14 jet interceptors available at a dozen bases in the North East Air Defense Sector alone, including Otis Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts, Langley Air Force Base in Virginia and Andrews Air Force Base near Washington, D.C. Had they so desired, the U.S. authorities could have intercepted the hijacked planes quickly and efficiently, as had been done 67 times in the previous year when contact had been lost with planes in U.S. airspace”

As former British cabinet minister Michael Meacher notes, there is simply no rational way to explain why “the U.S., the biggest military power with the most advanced technologies in the world, failed to scramble any of the fighter aircraft in the F-16 squadron at Andrews Air Force Base, just 10 miles from Washington, as soon as the hijackings were discovered.”

- We “knew” the twin towers collapsed as a result of the impact of the planes and fires fed by fuel aboard the aircraft.

In fact, however, it is now clear from extensive tests and research carried out by independent investigators such as Brigham Young University physics professor Steven E. Jones that the quick, near-symmetrical collapse of these buildings could not have been caused by fire and impact damage. As Dr. Jones notes, the official version of the collapse of these buildings simply cannot be true “unless some of the basic laws of physics had been temporarily suspended that day.”

The buildings could have come down in the way they did only as a result of controlled demolition using hundreds of pounds of strategically placed high-temperature cutter-charge explosives such as thermite, HMX or RDX. We will look at the circumstances surrounding the collapse of WTC Buildings 1, 2 and 7 in more detail next month.

*See page 10 for source list.
This article to be continued in August’s Street Newz ...*

Main Sources for 9/11: One of History’s Greatest Frauds (pg 9)

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- “The War on Truth: 9/11, Disinformation and the Anatomy of Terrorism” by Nafeex Mossaddeq Ahmed
- “The Terror Timeline: Year by Year, Day by Day, Minute by Minute” by Paul Thompson
- “Global Outlook: The Magazine of 9/11 Truth”: Issues 1 to 13 (Ian Woods, editor), P.O. Box 222, Oro, Ontario L0L 2X0
- “9/11 Revisited: Scientific and Ethical Questions” (DVD) by Steven E. Jones
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- “Towers of Deception: The Media Cover-up of 9/11” by Barrie Zwicker

Who is to Blame for the Tent People?

By Garda Ghista

May 22, 2009 “Information Clearing House” --- Hyderabad, India -- In America, more and more people are subjected to the humiliation of losing their job, and then when they cannot pay their mortgage they get a fat wad of papers delivered to their door by the local sheriff telling them in brief to pay up or vacate. And then they have to leave or be thrown out of their own home. And then when no job is forthcoming they cannot even downsize to an apartment. They are forced to go to the lowest level of subsistence. They buy a tent and pitch it near some water, maybe a river or a tap somewhere.

I was becoming more and more appalled living in America in 2008 and up to May 2009 and watching more and more “tent cities” springing up across the country. And then as those tent cities get more and more established, at regular intervals, maybe once a month, the local police invade the area and make a brutal sweep of the premises and drive all those tent people out of their tents and onto the road somewhere. And after the police have gone, the people return to what’s left of their tent and their meager possessions. This is America today. It is “poverty amidst plenty.” That phrase is from the 1929 Great Depression. And in 1929 the police conducted the same sweeps that they are doing today across America. Is it not heartbreaking? Or shall we say, does it not make your heart bleed to see this kind of existence of the people?

And now I am in Hyderabad, India. And if you go along Highway 9 which runs through Hyderabad, what do you see? All along the highway, there are vendors selling this and that like nariyal pani - coconut water - or mangoes or colorful little trinkets. But behind those vendors, in a fifteen foot wide corridor running along the wall, are tents. More tents. And these tents have been there forever. They are not so nice as the American tents. They are made of dark green or black pieces of plastic somehow moulded or stuck together in some shape so as to rise a bit above the ground with one opening. And here is where the people live and sleep and go to the bathroom and take bath - but where do they go to the bathroom and where do they take their bath? And where do they cook and eat? In the daytime they are lying in front of their “tents” or sitting and chatting happily. That’s the amazing part of it. If we visit a tent city in America - the newly created tent city - it is sure we will find severe mental depression. Economist Shrii Prabhat R. Sarkar told us that this new Great Depression will be accompanied by severe mental depression. It is but natural. But in Hyderabad, along Highway 9, I don’t yet see that mental depression. And earlier in the 1990s when I used to visit the slums here or see the women breaking stones with axes in the rock quarries, there was no mental depression. Why? I think it is because this was their life from birth. They never knew any other life. They never expected any other life. They lived with No Expectations.

But why should anyone, why should even a single person, be relegated to living in a tent, to living without a bathroom, without running water nearby, to keep themselves clean? Who is to blame that people live in tents? In America I was saying that it is the *&^%\$ bankers and speculators who have robbed

the country blind and are hence directly responsible for the tent people. But what about India where tent people have lived for decades if not longer? Who is to

blame? Is it the sum total of politicians who ruled all those decades and never gave a *&^%\$ about the tent people? Then what do we tell to those tent people? Should we not tell them that God never meant for them to live under pieces of plastic along the highway? Should we not tell them that it is the moral responsibility of all political leaders to provide them with food, water, shelter, clothes, soap, health care and education? How do we tell these simple, sweet tent people that there is a better way? How would you tell them? I want to tell them this now, but I don’t know how to start. How do we talk to them in a way that is relevant to their lives? Is it our job then to take away their simple acceptance of their plight and inspire them to demand the minimum necessities from their cold, callous government? Is that our job? Is it our job to take away their simplicity and raise their political consciousness and make them outraged at the economic injustice of their lives? For some reason, i cannot bear their plight and neither can I bear that they accept their plight so happily.

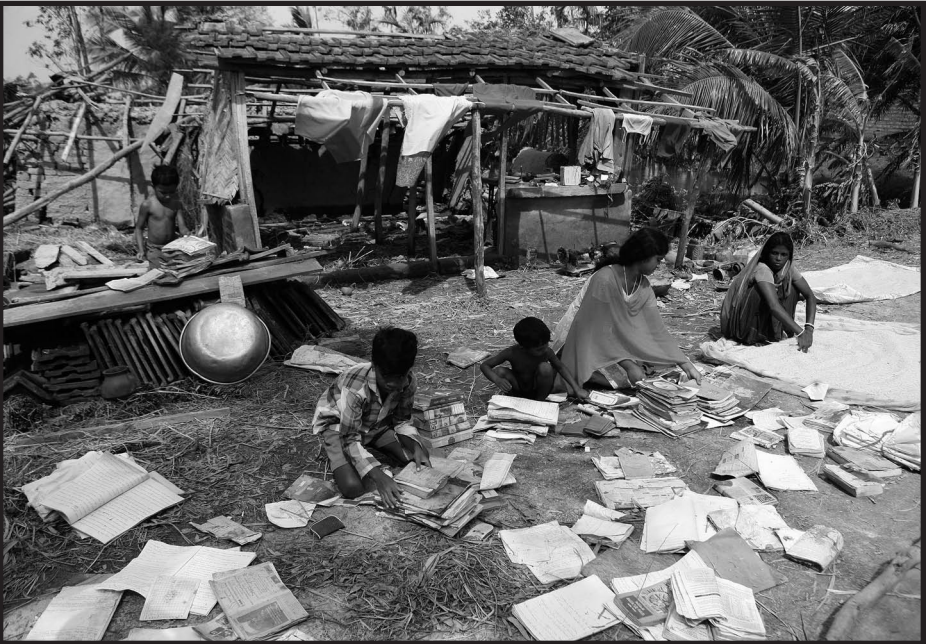
It reminds me of what Professor Muhammad Yunus, Grameen Bank founder, wrote in his autobiography regarding the famine of 1970s in Bangladesh. He would be teaching economic theories to his students inside the classroom, and outside, just at the door, starving men, women and children would just lie down and wait to die. They didn’t fight. They didn’t rebel. They were not even angry with anyone. They accepted everything – even their own vastly premature death.

See how painful also it is to read that 150,000 farmers across India have committed suicide in the past five years to escape the slow and agonizing process of starvation. Easier to die the short agony of poison than the long agony of starvation! But why do they feel no anger? Why don’t they rebel? Is it that they do not know whom to rebel against? That they do not know who is responsible for their tortures and humiliations and finally their starvation? Then again, isn’t it our duty to tell them who is responsible? Isn’t it our duty to inspire them to fight back? Did wealthy people ever distribute their wealth voluntarily to the downtrodden? No. They only distribute when the poor demand it. So why not all of us go and meet the tent people and tell them that they do not need to live like this, that the immoral, indifferent, heartless politicians are responsible, and that they should fight those politicians, remove them from power and bring moralists to power who have hearts full of love for the common people. And whoever has a conscience, whoever loves morality should join them in that fight and guide them and become one with them.

Garda Ghista is a freelance journalist and author of *The Gujarat Genocide: A Case Study in Fundamentalist Cleansing and Wife Abuse: Breaking It Down and Breaking Out*. She is also Founding President of the World Prout Assembly (worldproutassembly.org), a non-profit organization dedicated to transferring economic power from corporations to the common people and to fighting injustice in every sphere of life.

photos: A girl uses a hand-pump to fill drinking water on the outskirts of Jammu 30/05/2009 REUTERS/Amit Gupta

Cyclone victims dry their books and rice outside their damaged houses at Patharpatima Island in the Sundarbans delta, about 100 km (62 miles) south from the eastern Indian city of Kolkata, May 26, 2009. Nearly 120 people have been killed by a cyclone that ripped through Bangladesh and eastern India including the Sundarbans, which is home to the world’s largest tiger reserve, while millions remained marooned by floodwaters or living in shelters. REUTERS/Jayanta Shaw (INDIA ENVIRONMENT DISASTER SOCIETY)



On The Mountaintop With God’s Eyes

Looking out from the mountaintop I see much and only
measure by the
intensity of the things that attract my attention.

I see a giant fractal phenomenon, imbued with a diversity of
wind... a
multitude of points of light, that, in flowing, swish the winds
around
them. Some of these points of light think they exist apart from
the
giant fractal phenomenon which, in turn, creates drama.

I see confused angels looking for, and always testing, dance
partners.

I see the strength of truth and the manic fear of it.

I see humility and the place of impossible doubt.

I see myself.

I see grandness and simplicity.

I see longing. I see every answer residing in patience.

I see rare weirdness that is given due consideration.

I see freedom, unavoidable freedom.

I see a pacifying of the anxious.

I see the way of communication become obvious. I see the
dance.

I see the spirit of patience and the peace of its invulnerability.

I see all the angels that look to the mountaintop and know
them to be me.

I see the world. I see the devil and its purpose to inspire the
imagining of Hell.

I see a Crown waiting to be humbled.

I see average Joe remembering he is me, with the wisdom of
the highest
and the humility to trust in the light of being so as to not get
trapped in doctrine.

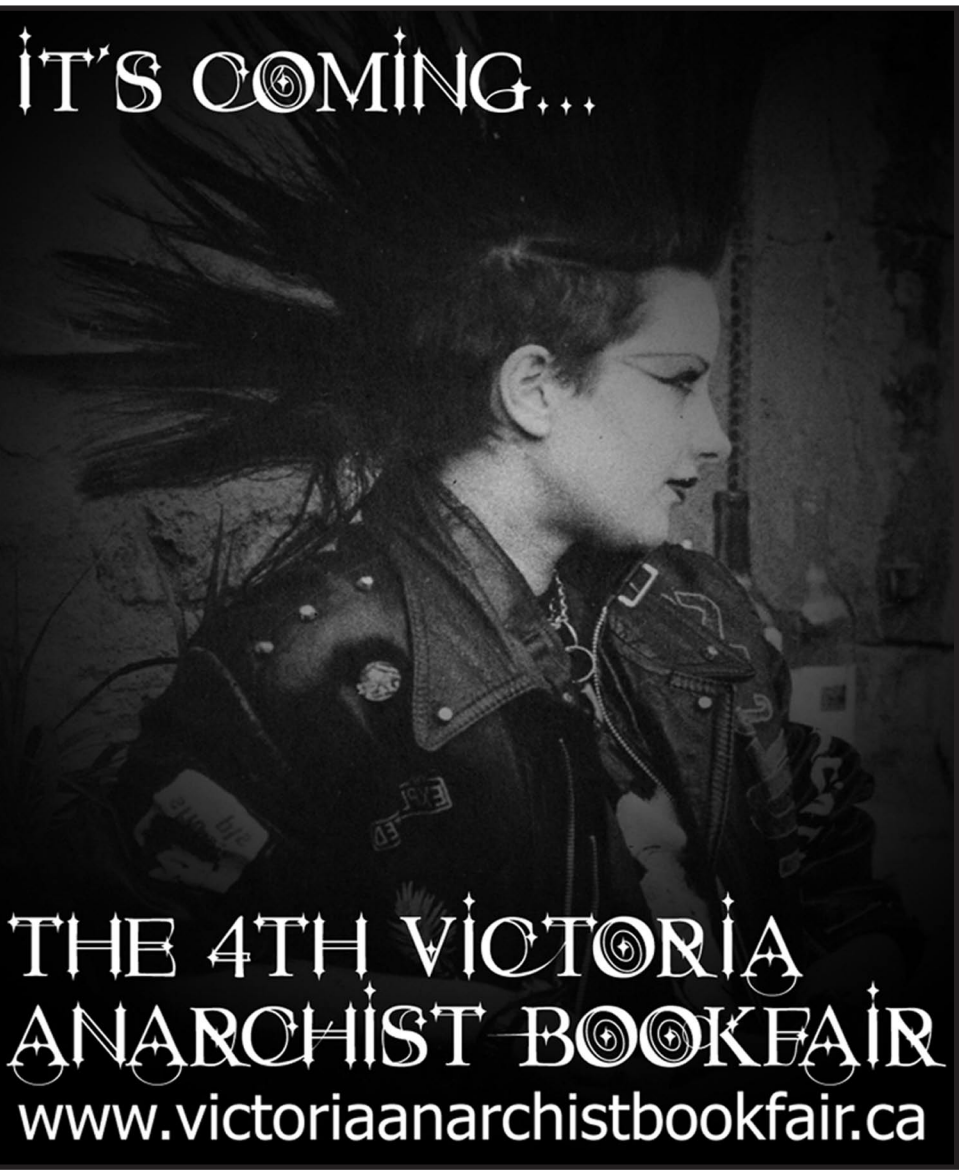


I’m seeing a miracle. I’m seeing the
glorious adventure of those who
would be alive to see the first days of
Heaven on Earth.

I see the question changing from
“What choice will best serve
rightness?” to “How could we have
ever believed we made choices?”

I see a tired ego named David wishing
you all peace and inspiring dreams.

David A. Johnston



Peace Poem

Help me I say
To find the way
Through the crossroads
Day by day

I have my vision
I have my mind
My soul is yours
And you are kind

I need your spirit
I need your light
I cannot go on
Without your might

Grant me peace
And I will dwell
Amongst the humble
In a quiet dell

Guide me through
My journey fair
For you are all
And I am there



a note from the editor ... we had a phone call from someone asking if the street newz might list places that offer free internet -- i think he wants free internet connection, website hosting, email, that sort of thing. if you have any information to share, please send it to streetnewz@islandnet.com. we also heard from someone wanting to know if he could send something about housing for vets ... by all means! thanks, have an awesome day!

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out of poverty,
not keep you there.



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hope for a revolution
in America, it lies in
getting Elvis Presley
to become
Che Guevara."

Phil Ochs

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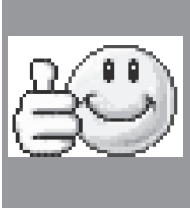
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